

Creation of the Texas Food Security Council

HB 2856 by Raymond (Ellis)

DIGEST:	HB 2856 would have created the Texas Food Security Council. The 14-member council would have been required to develop programs and plans to help low-income families and communities have access to food; provide assistance to local communities in applying for public and private grants to develop comprehensive responses to hunger; provide local communities information regarding increasing access to food, land for community gardens and development of farmers markets and local food policy councils and disseminate nutrition education. The council could have applied for and accepted public or private grants. It would have been required to report to the lieutenant governor and the speaker of the House regarding its activities and any recommendations for legislation by December 1, 1996. The council would have been abolished September 1, 1997.
GOVERNOR'S REASON FOR VETO:	"House Bill 2856 seeks to create the Texas Food Security Council to purportedly address hunger in Texas. It is not in the State's best interest to create another bureaucratic entity that will solicit public and private grants when a private organization could be more effective in dealing with this issue, using the same resources."
RESPONSE:	<p>Rep. Richard Raymond, the author of HB 2856, said: "I am disappointed that the governor would veto this effort to address the problem of hunger in Texas. More than one million Texas children under the age of 12 have inadequate economic, family or community resources to provide enough food to grow up healthy. Most of these children come from families that are working poor.</p> <p>"The Texas Food Security Council was designed to accomplish four goals over the next two years: (1) study how existing government resources could be used to increase access to food for Texas families; (2) develop strategies to reduce dependence on government assistance; (3) empower local communities to create their own strategies to fight hunger; and (4) make legislative recommendations for the next legislative session on hunger-related issues.</p>

"I worked very hard with the interested parties in drafting this legislation in order to guarantee a zero fiscal note. I believe it is in the best interest of the state to ensure that our children grow up strong and healthy, and working to coordinate the state's response to the problem of hunger is one way we can help create a better future for our children.

"At a time when the federal government is looking to give the states more control over food and nutrition programs — but provide less money to pay for them — it is unfortunate that Governor Bush does not consider hungry children a priority."

NOTES:

HB 2856 passed the House on the Local and Consent Calendar and was not analyzed in a *Daily Floor Report*.